



An Overview of Social Pluralism in Umayyad Reign: In the light of the Teachings of Prophet (SAW)

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Abstract

*In this article we discuss the relationship of Umayyad rulers with the general society. Due to their behavior, the *Ḍimmīs* lived a life of comfort and tranquility with great protocol. Actually The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) designed the state system on the basis of social pluralism and made the society of that time a social pluralistic society. Social pluralism is still a big problem in Europe which it has not solved till today but Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) have solved the problem of social pluralism, in His time, people of all religions (Jews, Christians, hypocrites, infidels, slaves and masters, rich and poor, Muslims and non-Muslims) of the society were free to adhere to their respective religions irrespective of religion and nationality. Similarly, in the Rightly Guided Caliphate, there are no religious differences anywhere in the society. The same social pluralistic society, which was founded by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), continued as usual. The same process continued in the Umayyad period. The political benevolence and respect accord of the Muslim rulers resulted in the non-Muslim subjects blindly trusting their non-religious rulers and turning to them for their religious disputes, considering them as defenders of their rights.*

Keywords: *Umayyad Rulers, *Ḍimmīs*, Prophet Muhammad, Social Pluralism, Religion, Nationality, Jews, Christians, hypocrites, infidels, slaves.*

The social pluralistic society came into existence in the time of the Prophet ﷺ which did not exist before him, which he had made with great beauty. It included all the tribes belonging to different religions of Medina. (Medina was inhabited by a large number of Jews, Banu Qureeza, Banu Nuzair and Banu Qainuqa) There was



a large Jewish seminary in Medina called Madras, and in Aaus and Khazraj people used to pray for sick children that if the child survived, they would make him a Jew.⁽¹⁾ Jews, Christians, hypocrites, infidels, slaves and masters, rich and poor and Muslims all participated on the basis of equality. Social pluralism is still a big problem in Europe which it has not solved till today but heﷺ had solved the problem of social pluralism. In the time of Holy Prophetﷺ, people of all religions of the society were free to practice their religions.

Similarly, in the Rightly Guided Caliphate, religious differences are nowhere to be seen in the society. The same social pluralistic society, which was founded by the Prophet, continued as usual. This can be gauged from the reign of Umar Farooq. He fully supported complete religious freedom during his reign. This religious freedom was for all nations except the people of Mecca. He kept the People of the Book on their religions, received Jizyah from them, their places of worship were organized and were not demolished but left to their own devices. The best example of this is the agreement reached between Umar and the Archbishop of Jerusalem on the occasion of the conquest of Jerusalem, in which the Jews were allowed to go against the wishes of the archbishop. They were allowed to settle in Jerusalem (although Christians had completely barred Jews from entering the holy city) and settled in Jerusalem by inviting seventy Jewish families from Tabriz⁽²⁾.

Non-Muslims in Mu‘wyah’s[ؓ] Reign (41 AH - 59 AH)

Just as great care was taken to protect the rights of the *Ḍimmīs* during the rule of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, so too was during the time of Mu‘wyah[ؓ], special care was taken to ensure that non-Muslims enjoyed complete freedom under Islamic rule. No conflicts were reported about the worship places. Mu‘wyah[ؓ] faced the Christians more than his predecessors because not only he but also his intendants were bound by the covenant.

One of the incidents narrated by Philip-k-Hitti in this regard is that “in a mosque which was built with the church of John in the era of Farooqi, Ḥaḍrat Mu‘wyah[ؓ] in his reign intended to expand the mosque land, but due to the disapproval of the Christians, he abandoned his intention”.⁽³⁾ Although the Christians were subjugated and he was the ruler, he gave up the intention of including the church land in the mosque without the permission of the subjects without distinction of religion. Uqbah b. Nafe‘ Fehri, one of his intendants, who was the governor of Egypt, needed some land. With the permission of Mu‘wyah[ؓ], he chose a simple land which was not in anyone’s possession. His servant said, “You should choose a good plot”, He said, “It cannot be happened. One of the conditions in the agreement with the *Ḍimmīs* is that their land should not be taken out of their possession.”⁽⁴⁾

The result of the political benevolence and respect of the treaty of the Muslim rulers was that the non-Muslim subjects blindly trusted their non-religious rulers and turned to them for their religious disputes, believing them to be defenders of their rights, the Marooni and Ya'qubi tribes are especially famous who, instead of going to their religious leaders, often sought their religious decisions from Mu'wyah ʿ. (5) Their trust in Mu'wyah ʿ was not unreasonable because of his character as a Muslim ruler demanded that he be trusted even in sensitive matters such as religious matters. Philip's Hitti has narrated an incident from the time of Ḥaḍrat Mu'wyah ʿ “according to which a church in Owaisyah had collapsed due to an earthquake and Ḥaḍrat Mu'wyah ʿ had it rebuilt”. (6)

In the army, non-Muslims were recruited from the time of Farooqi, but at that time they did not build trust, so they were not appointed to responsible positions. But in the time of Mu'wyah ʿ, many non-Muslims were appointed to the responsible positions. One proof of the extreme level of religious tolerance within the government is that the Muslims always chose the most deserving people and did not care about religion and creed, so Mu'wyah ʿ appointed a Christian named Mansoor b. Sarjun for financial management (7) While giving the status of personal physician to a Christian physician B. Aḥṭal and also made his own translator. (8)

In addition, the court poet of Mu'wyah, Akḥṭal (d.95 AH), who belonged to the well-known Christian tribe of Banu Taḡhlab, remained in constant contact with the Umayyad rulers till Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz was appointed Caliph, because he did not give rewards to the poets so Akḥṭal's relation with the court also ended like Jarīr's (d.101 AH). The author of the book “Al-Aḡhani” has written that he sometimes came to the court of Abdul Malik b. Marwan while he was drunk and had the sign of the Christian cross around his neck. (9) The caliphs at the time disliked this move but did not forbid it on the grounds that alcohol was not forbidden to them according to their religious class and in the spirit of social pluralism, the Muslim government did not interfere in the cultural affairs of non-Muslims. Similarly, Sahib al-Aḡhani writes that blood, games and singing were common among non-Muslims, so an Iraqi singer named Haneen came to Medina to perform his art. The house was so crowded that the roof fell down and Muḡhni also died in it. (10) Abū'l Hassan Ali Nadwi has described these incidents as evidence of the spread of immorality in Umayyad society but I think it is Maulana's mistake. In a Muslim state, when non-Muslims have the right to live according to their culture and civilization, which the Islamic State is not allowed to restrict, it is not reasonable to point out the depravity of society. Even Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz was appointed Caliph because he did not give rewards to the poets, so all the poets, including Akḥṭal and Jarīr (3 AH), lost their connection with the court, even though Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz also liked Jarīr. Yazīd supported Akḥṭal in

every possible way until once when Mu‘wyah wanted to punish Akḥṭal for mocking the Ansar, Yazīd resisted and persuaded the Ansar to make peace by giving them wealth.⁽¹¹⁾

Marwan B. Ḥakam (54 AH - 65 AH)

In the time of Marwan b. Ḥakam, Christians were given various positions in the government. In this connection, it is stated that Marwan b. Ḥakam appointed a Christian “Atanasius” along with another Christian named “Isaac” to certain positions of government in Egypt. Later, he rose to the position of “Rais al-Diwan” and became the owner of the gardens. The amount of gold and silver he had was incalculable. He built a synagogue in Al-Raha, which was completed with the rent of the four hundred shops he owned.⁽¹²⁾

Reign of Abdul Malik b. Marwan(65 AH - 66 AH)

The emancipation of Christians during the reign of Abdul Malik b. Marwan can be gauged from the fact that Abdul Malik b. Marwan allowed a Christian poet, Akḥṭal, to reach the caliph at any time without interruption. So he would come to Abdul Malik at any time of the day or night, wearing silk robes and holding a picture of the Roman cross hanging around his neck with a golden chain, and drops of wine would be falling from his beard.⁽¹³⁾ But we do not think that Abdul Malik, as the caliph of an Islamic state, can be encouraged to tolerate all this.

Abdul Malik, hearing of the fame of Atanasius, a Christian scholar of his time, entrusted him with the task of educating his younger brother, Abdul Azīz b. Marwan. Later, Abdul Azīz became the governor of Egypt. When Abdul Azīz became the governor of Egypt, his Christian teacher also went to Egypt with his students.⁽¹⁴⁾

Freedom to build churches in the Umayyad period

There are many examples of the construction of new churches in the Umayyad period which have been mentioned by historians. During the reign of Abdul Malik, a wealthy Christian from the city of Al-Reha (Orissa) named Atanasius built an elegant church in his hometown in the name of Ḥaḍrat Maryam and also built a separate building for baptism. It contained a picture of Christ which was known to have been sent to King Abjar. He built two great churches in Kastat. He also built churches and monasteries for monks in other Egyptian cities. Abdul Azīz b. Marwan also employed some Christians as Hajib in Egypt. With the permission of the Islamic government, he built a church in the city of Helwan called St. John's, although the city was founded by Muslims. In 711 AD, a Jacobite church was built in Antioch by order of Caliph Al-Walīd. During the reign of Yazīd II, the Jacobite

bishop of Antioch, Mar Elias, entered Antioch with great dignity and power, along with many priests and monks, and inaugurated a new church he had built there. The following year, he opened another church in Sarmada, a village in Antioch district, and if anyone opposed it, it was his own rival Christian denomination, which adopted the beliefs of the Chalcedon religious council. During the reign of the next caliph, Khalid al-Qasri, the ruler of Iraq, Arabia and Iraq e Ajam, built a church so that his mother, who was a Christian, could worship in it.⁽¹⁵⁾ The construction of Christian churches in the Umayyad period reflected the religious freedom of the Umayyad that they had given to Christians.

Non-Muslims in Walīd b. Abdul Malik's Reign (86 AH- 96 AH)

The conquest of Andalusia in Islamic history reflects the glorious past of Muslim conquerors. Andalusia is the peninsula at the tip of southwestern Europe, which is now home to two separate kingdoms, Spain and Portugal.⁽¹⁶⁾

Existence of Jews and Christians:

Reyast Ali Nadwi writes: At the time of the entry of Muslims, Christianity and Judaism were the only two religions in Andalusia. However, there was also a tradition of vices in southern France. Relations between Christians and Jews in Spain were not good. Although Andalusia was not devoid of Jews, they did not have the status of a ruling nation. However, in terms of their wealth, they had a significant influence in this country.⁽¹⁷⁾

Reign of Sulaymān b. Abdul Malik (96 AH - 99 AH)

During the reign of Sulaymān b. Abd al-Malik, there were conflicts among the Muslims, especially in Andalusia, which had a bad effect on the Islamic government, which benefited the Christians. When Mūsā b. Naṣīr left Andalus for Damascus, Caliph Walīd b. Abdul Malik was on his deathbed and his brother Sulaymān b. Abdul Malik was preparing to become caliph. Sulaymān sent a swift messenger to Mūsā to slow down his journey. Caliph Walīd was suffering from a disease from which he will not be able to recover, so he should enter Damascus after Sulaymān's accession to the throne. On the other hand, the message of Caliph Walīd himself was received by Mūsā that he should decide the destination of the journey in a hurry so that he would not be deprived of the visit of Amīr al-mu'minin. It was very difficult for Mūsā b. Naṣīr to follow either of these two messages. He did not deliberately rush or deliberately delay, but kept the pace of his journey from which he was coming. However, there was a desire to meet Walīd. The spoils of Andalusia, with which Sulaymān wanted to enhance the splendor of his court, were presented to Walīd.⁽¹⁸⁾

With this, the heyday of Mūsā b. Naṣīr came to an end. Forty days had passed since Mūsā came to Damascus when the tragedy of the death of his guardian Walīd took place. Walīd was succeeded by his brother Sulaiman b. Abdul Malik. He had been angry with Mūsā ever since his messenger returned with a disappointing answer from Mūsā. So he swore to punish Mūsā severely. He summoned Mūsā to the court and they had a very bitter conversation. Then Sulaymān b. Abdul Malik made Mūsā b. Naṣīr stand in the blazing sun. His hair became sweaty and when he could not bear the heat, he fainted and fell down. Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz also used to attend this meeting. He was suffering from anxiety and restlessness. He said that it was a very hard day for me and I felt so much pain this day. He recommended for Mūsā to Sulaymān which was accepted. Mūsā was released on bail and he was ordered to be removed from all jobs at the same time.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is narrated that the Mūsā died in disappointment. Abdul Azīz b. Mūsā, the son of b. Naṣīr, who was the successor of his father, also faced difficult circumstances about which there are conflicting opinions.

Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz (99 AH to 101 AH)

Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz, who is known as the fifth Rightly Guided Caliph, treated non-Muslims and the People of the Book very well even during his ideal reign. He re-established the religious rights of Ḍimmīs which were abolished in the reign of previous caliphs. A church in Damascus used to be part of a Muslim family's estate. Christians filed a claim to Umar b. AbdulAzīz so he returned the church. He said if it is in the agreement of the Christians then you cannot get it.⁽²⁰⁾

Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz did not make any religious concessions in the matter of justice. Even in cases, there was no difference between the Ḍimmīs and the royal family and both were treated equally. Once Hisham b. Abdul Malik (125 AH) filed a lawsuit against a Christian. Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz equated the two and Hisham was offended. When he spoke harshly in pride to the Christian, Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz rebuked him and threatened to punish him.⁽²¹⁾

Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz completely stopped the hardships that the workers used to inflict on the Ḍimmīs in connection with the collection of Jizyah and tried to compensate them as much as possible for the corruption that had taken place. Accusing B. Ash'ath of supporting the uprising (80 AH-81 AH), Hajjaj had increased the amount of Jizyah on the Ḍimmīs of the Iraqis. Ḥaḍrat Umar b. AbdulAzīz reduced this increase⁽²²⁾ while B. Sa'd says that Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz suspended all taxes except Jizyah.⁽²³⁾

In addition, Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz sent an order to his intendant A'di b. Artat to find out the conditions of the Ḍimmīs in your circle, those who have become old and are unable to earn money according to their needs, issue a stipend

from Bait ul Mal according to their needs. However, because of their Islam and anti-Muslim animosity, he opposed keeping friendship with them and dealing with them instead of Muslims. He also issued an order that if a person dies or runs away, the amount due on him will not be recovered from his heirs.⁽²⁴⁾

These measures show that the time of Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz was similar to the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Even in the times of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Umar, just as Jizyah was not taken from old and infirm people, the same method was followed here and some facilities were provided to non-Muslims.

Justice of Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz for the Non-Muslims

Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz also used to give special justice in the affairs of non-Muslims. It is narrated that a Ḍimmī from Homs came and said: Amīr al-mu'minin, I request you to decide according to the Book of Allah. "In which case", he said? He said that Abbas B. Walīd b. Abdul Malik had usurped his land. Abbas was sitting there. He asked him, "Abbas, what do you say?" He said: "This land was given to me by Amīr al-mu'minin Walīd b. Abdul Malik. He has written me an article about it", He asked Ḍimmī! "What do you say now", he said, "Amīr al-mu'minin, I demand a decision from you according to the Book of Allah." Umar said, "Yes! Allah's command is more obligatory than the writing of Walīd b. Abdul Malik. Abbas! Give him back his property." So they returned the land to him.⁽²⁵⁾

The narration of justice for Non-Muslims is also found in the time of Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz: Walīd b. Abdul Malik had a son named Raūḥ who was brought up in Bādiyah and looked like Bedouin. Some people brought a case to Umar II about a few shops in Homs (where Christians lived). These shops actually belonged to them but were written by Walīd, the father of the Raūḥ to him. Umar ordered him to return their shops. Raūḥ replied: According to Walīd's document, I own it. He replied: Walīd's document will not be of any use to you. Evidence has been provided that the shops belong to these people. Now you hand over their shops to them. Then Raūḥ and a man from Homs got up and started coming back. On the way, Raūḥ threatened Homsī. He returned to Umar and said, "By God, Amīr al-mu'minin, he is threatening me." Umar ordered Ka'b B. Hamid, who was the commander of his bodyguards, to go to Raūḥ, if he would hand over the shops to him, otherwise he would be beheaded and brought to me. Hearing this, a well-wisher of Raūḥ came out of the court and informed Raūḥ about the command of Umar. The Raūḥ lost consciousness. Ka'b went to him in such a state that he had pulled the sword out of its sheath a span. He told him to come and empty the shop. He said: Yes, and went in and emptied the shops and handed them over to him.⁽²⁶⁾

Someone asked Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz: Amīr al-mu'minin! What about the high prices in your time and cheap in the time of the rulers before you? He said that

those who ruled before me used to put more burden on the *Ḍimmīs* than they could bear, so that they had no choice but to sell their assets. That is why the prices of their goods were falling. On the contrary, I put a burden on everyone just as much as he can bear, and the person (*Ḍimmī*, Christian or Jew) who has to sell his goods can sell as he pleases.⁽²⁷⁾

Distinction between Muslims and Christians

Although in the Rightly Guided Caliphate there were all kinds of distinctions between the Muslims and the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) and the People of the Book were forbidden to be compared to the Muslims and similarly the Muslims did not do anything similar to them. In the same way, after the first century, *Ḥaḍrat Umar b. Abdul Azīz* presented the whole picture of the Righteous Caliphate in his character. That is why in Islamic history he is remembered by the name of the fifth Righteous Caliph and Umar II.

Following in the footsteps of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, *Ḥaḍrat Umar II* maintained the distinction between the People of the Book and the Muslims and forbade the Christians to imitate the Muslims. *Qari Muhammad Tayyib* writes that some people of *Bani Taḡhlab* came to *Ḥaḍrat Umar II* who was wearing turbans like the Arabs. They said, “O *Amīr al-mu'minin*, count us among the Arabs.” He said, “Who are you?” “We are *Bani Taḡhlab*”, they replied. He said, “Are you not one of the Arabs?” The answer was no, we are Christians. He said: My scissors should be brought, so he cut off their foreheads and their turbans, and took off from each of them a wide bandage over their heads, so that they might be tied up in their loins like those of a Christian. There was a special distinction which distinguished them from the Arabs. Then he said, “Do not ride on the saddles, but ride on the cradles and hang both your legs to one side.”⁽²⁸⁾

Imam Abū Yūsuf described *Umar b. 'Abdul Azīz's* discriminatory decree as follows: In view of the conditions imposed on Christians in previous treaties, 'Umar II wrote to one of his intendants: Let the openly installed crosses be broken by proclaimed, let no Jew or Christian sit on the saddle, let them ride on the cradle, and let their women do the same, emphasize that no Christian should wear *Qaba'*, *Fazz* or *Manqash Yemeni* clothes. I have been told that many of your Christians here have started wearing turbans again and have stopped tying their belts. They have given up their hair and started wearing long hair. By your age, if all this is being done in front of your eyes, it is a sign of your weakness. By repeating these things, they want to find out what do you say. Take consideration which I told you and stop the people doing this.⁽²⁹⁾

This edict proves two things which *Ḥaḍrat Umar II* practiced in his time, one is the distinction and the other is resemblance, because Muslims and Christians are

not alike. Since Khyber was far away and the flag of Muslim power was rising, the hearts of the Muslims were completely devoid of the “similitude of the Christians” but naturally the conquered nations are inclined towards every way of the conqueror. They wanted to dress like Arabs, wear turbans, take off their handkerchiefs and belts and adopt the style of Muslims and keep their hair on their heads. Therefore, the door of similarity was closed by the Muslims but it was open by the non-Muslims and it was very possible for the Christians to become Arabic and take measures to establish their religious and political rights through dress. Therefore, Ḥaḍrat Umar II also issued a pre-decree and practically snatched the distinctive marks of Arabism from the Christians in the same assembly. Secondly, with this distinction and dissimilarity, where they established the glory of Islam, they also lowered the glory of disbelief, as is appearing in the order of cutting the turban, ordering to climb the ridge, and riding with both feet hanging on one side.⁽³⁰⁾

Prohibition of taking Jizyah from new Muslim Christians and ruling on Christian inheritance

In the time of Ḥaḍrat Umar II, an intendant Abdul Hameed b. Abdul Raḥmān wrote a letter to him and in response to this, the subject of Ḥaḍrat Umar II letter was: You have asked me that some Christians, Jews and Magians have converted to Islam. What should be done with those who have been subject to heavy jizyah? You have asked for permission to collect the jizyah as before. Allah Almighty sent Muhammad ﷺ as a preacher and not as a tax collector. Those of the followers of these religions who convert to Islam will be responsible for the Zakat on their wealth and no Jizyah will be imposed on them. His inheritance will not be given to his non-Muslim relatives. The inheritance will be distributed among them in such a way that his wealth will be deposited in the treasury of the Muslims, and it will be distributed among all the Muslims. If janabah is performed from such person, his diyat will also be paid from the wealth of Allah which is distributed among all Muslims.⁽³¹⁾

Abdul Razāq narrates a tradition of division of inheritance in one of his works as follows: It is narrated from Sauri that Umar II freed a Christian and deposited his inheritance in the treasury when he died.⁽³²⁾

Reign of Hisham b. Abdul Malik (105 AH-125 AH)

If we look at the era of Hisham b. Abdul Malik, then non-Muslims and Muslims were all equal in that era too and in doing justice he did not even care about wealth. Once a Christian hit Hisham's son's slave on something and he was injured, then Hisham's son Muhammad's eunuch hit the Christian in return. When Hisham was informed, he immediately summoned the eunuch. He tried to take refuge in

Muhammad but could not escape Hisham's punishment. Hisham punished him and warned his son.⁽³³⁾

During the reign of Hisham, Muslims accepted the invitations of Christians, exercised their rights as neighbors, helped them in their sorrows, sheltered them, gave them protection, gave them jobs, and treated them well. Precisely the Muslims had the excellent social relations with the Christians and Jews in particular and other non-Muslims in general. But in the time of Hisham b. Abdul Malik, social relations exceeded the Shari'ah limits. Muslims were not generally allowed to attend non-Muslim religious festivals, but in Hisham's time, Muslims would join other sects and march in procession, carrying some crosses. Also, their religious leaders lived side by side in their special attire. Similarly, in the time of Hisham b. Abdul Malik, Patriarch McKay once entered Alexandria, leading a large and magnificent procession, with crucifixes, candles, and the Gospels in front of him, and the priests chanting, "Allah has sent a peacemaker, a modern Mark."⁽³⁴⁾

Promotion of Islam among Christians in the Umayyad period

T.W. Arnold writes: In view of the religious freedom that Muslim authorities had granted to Christian subjects in the early days of their rule, it is difficult to accept the general idea that Islam has spread by the sword. We are forced to look for the other reasons which caused their change in religion instead of coercion. Unfortunately no details are available on this topic and we have to resort to speculation.⁽³⁵⁾

Many Christian scholars believe that in the eighth century (the Umayyad period) the moral and spiritual degradation of the Eastern Church turned people's hearts away from Christianity and they embraced Islam in search of a pure spiritual atmosphere, which had reached to them with a new enthusiasm and zeal. One sect was opposed to the other, and Christian scholars were fighting with each other over the most complex issues of religious faith. The Orthodox, Nestorian, Jacobite, and Utexus persecuted one another with extreme hostility, and the rift in religious differences grew to the point that instead of all Christian denominations working together to protect and support Christianity, they were happy to see their opponents under Islam. There will be many people whose faith has been shaken by these constant debates, so it is not surprising that thousands of people, disturbed and disgusted by these constant debates, have taken refuge in the straightforward doctrine of Tauheed. However, they also had to acknowledge the Prophet's message.⁽³⁶⁾

Arnold's view is that those who left Christianity and entered the realm of Islam under the influence of the rational tendencies of their time would have found many things in the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites that were common to both religions.

Therefore, as far as the components of faith and many other religious issues are concerned, they may not have felt the change of religion as strongly as those who had a little knowledge of the teachings of the Arabic Prophet, and there are many such common issues that arose in Damascus during and after the Umayyad period, directly from the close relationship between Christian and Muslim scholars because there is clear evidence from some scholars that the Byzantine scholars influenced the formal formation of Islamic beliefs. Thus, the earliest form and order of the Islamic faith in the Arabic language can be compared with the religious treatises of John Damascus and other Christian scholars. Similarly, the earliest Arabic mysticism, which had a tendency towards pure asceticism (and which was different from the later mysticism which adopted the doctrine of omnipotence), was largely influenced by Christian ideas, and evidence of its influence is evident. Particularly through many problems of some of the Mu'tazilite scholars who were involved in the discussion of the nature and attributes of God in the manner of the Byzantine scholars. The "Qadriyah sect" of Islam perhaps derived its belief in value directly from the Christian doctrine that man is independent in his actions. Similarly, the "Marjiya" who denied the eternal torment of Hell, which was against the belief of ordinary Muslims, was in complete harmony with the teachings of the Eastern Church.⁽³⁷⁾

On the contrary, the influence of the scholars of Islam in converting the infidels to Islam is evident in the narration that when Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal died, twenty thousand Christians, Jews and Magian have converted as Muslims following his instructions. Abū al-Faraj b. al-Jawzi, a well-known Hanbali jurist who was a popular and widely read scholar of his time, proudly said that the same number of people (twenty thousand) had converted to Islam at his hands.⁽³⁸⁾

The conversion of Christians to Islam also explains that the widespread and unprecedented success of the forces of Islam also shook the faith of the Christian nations that were subjugated by the Muslims and who saw God's hand in Islamic conquests. They considered the prosperity and success of the world to be the result of God's grace and believed that the Lord Almighty gives victory and success only to those who are His chosen servants. Therefore, in the success of the Muslims, they saw the legitimacy of Islam.⁽³⁹⁾

Despite being a non-Muslim, T.W. Arnold's views are clear throughout his writings, reflecting the fact that he acknowledges the excellent Muslim relations with Jews and Christians. And that Muslims have never forced non-Muslims to convert to Islam. Arnold's mention of the dimensions of relations between Christians and Muslims also shows his non-partisan mind that Islam, in the eyes of non-Muslims, advocates socio-cultural and religious relations with other nations.

Arnold openly writes: The Christian slave was always encouraged by his kind (Muslim) master to accept Islam and achieve freedom. But no systematic effort has come to our notice with the aim of forcibly converting the non-Muslim population to Islam, nor have we come to know of any regular persecution that is meant to uproot the Christian religion. If the caliphs of Islam had adopted either of these methods, they could have easily wiped out Christianity from their kingdom, just as “Ferdinand” and “Isabella” expelled the Muslims from Andalusia. King Louis XIV declared Protestantism a legal crime in France, or as the British government did not allow Jews to enter their country for three and a half centuries. As much as there were Eastern churches in Asia, they were completely cut off from the rest of the Christian world, and there was no one in the Christian countries of the West who would raise a finger in support of them, because Eastern churches were considered atheists and deviant from true religion so the survival of these churches to this day is strong evidence that Islamic governments had granted them universal religious freedom.⁽⁴⁰⁾

An Overview:

In short that the Umayyad government, being purely Arab, preferred the Arabs over the non-Arabs in the administration of the state and Arabs were appointed to all the key positions. However, the non-Arabs were living a very prosperous and comfortable life. Non-Muslims also enjoyed religious freedom, their status was equal in the eyes of the law, and their cases were decided according to their religious traditions. The Arabs were accustomed to living in separate quarters in the cities in the form of small tribes due to their tribal life. Every neighborhood was a small town with all the facilities for people to live a prosperous life. Each neighborhood had a strong wall in the form of an embankment with gates and various guards were responsible for the protection of the citizens. The rich lived in luxurious palaces and magnificent houses with pomp and show. The rooms of their houses were carpeted and curtains were hung in the doors. People wore loose-fitting clothes and people of different professions were accustomed to wearing different kinds of clothes. People's diet consisted of dates, meat, honey, wheat or barley bread and olive oil. People usually ate three meals a day. The use of tables and chairs was customary.

The entire population of the Islamic world seemed to be divided into four major groups:

- a. The Arab nobles who were regarded with honor as the conquerors of the country held all the key positions and were paid from the public treasury. They lived in splendid palaces and houses with great splendor. Most of the Umayyad caliphs and rich were lovers of music and wine. Hunting was their

- favorite hobby. The Caliph and the majority of the rich had “Harams” (Women’s enclosures) where emasculate persons (she-males) were appointed for service.
- b. Mwālī: These were non-Arabs who, in order to become part of Arab society, associate themselves with one or another Arab tribe after being freed from slavery or in the case of converting to Islam. They were desirous of having the higher status in the society. The non-Arabs gradually realized their power and demanded equal treatment from the Arabs but due to tribal prejudice the Umayyad did not treat them well and practiced discriminatory treatment with them in spite of their conversion to Islam. Jizyah and tribute amounts were collected from them. Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz saw these actions of the Umayyad with hatred, but the Umayyad rulers and workers did not give up their wrong policy. As a result, the Mwālī became disillusioned with the Umayyad and became sympathetic to their opponents and took part in the movement against them.
- c. Ḍimmīs: These were non-Muslims who settled in Muslim-conquered areas without converting to Islam. These included Christians, Jews, Parsis, and North Africans Berbers. They were exempt from military service. They paid Jizyah to Muslim conquerors, and in return the Islamic government was responsible for protecting their property and lives. They had equal status in the eyes of the law. Their mutual cases were decided according to their own religious laws and customs. They had all kinds of religious, intellectual and economic freedom. They were engaged in agriculture and trade.
- i. Slaves: These were the people who were taken prisoner on the battlefield as booty. According to Islamic teachings, they were treated better. They helped their masters in household chores. Slaves were bought and sold in the markets. Like Mwālīs, freed slaves, preferred to live with their masters and in case of their childless death they became the owners of their houses.

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